specially in Jammu & Kashmir and North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the steps taken to minimise their operations;

(c) whether it is a fact that the base camps of these agencies are located across the border; and

(d) if so, the methods adopted to combat the menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (d) Government is aware of the involvement of Pak ISI in continuing its efforts to promote extremist activities in the country particularly in Jammu & Kashmir and North-Eastern Region. Government is also aware of the fact that base camps are located across the border.

Government is alive to the situation and is taking all necessary steps to combat and frustrate the designs of Pak ISI.

DOT tender to companies for Optical Fibre Cable

580. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Telecommunication's tender to procure optical fibre cables was shelved and instead, certain companies were selected for the purpose; and

(b) the reason for scraping the tender in favour of the above companies?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) and (b) A tender for procurement of Optical Fibre Cables, which was issued on 22nd March, 1996 as scheduled was opened on 21.5.96. The tender was issued for procurement of 21,000 KMs of Optical Fibre Cables. The Tender was subsequently cancelled because of formation of cartelisation among the bidders.

To meet immediate requirements orders were placed on two PSU's namely M/s Optel for 2800 KMs & on M/HCL for 1200 KMs.

Subsequently limited Tenders were invited from eligile bidders as below:—

(i) 1100 Kms of 6 Fibres, Tender opened on 23.10.96

(ii) 6075 Kms of Fiber, Tender opened on 17.10.96

(iii) 820 Kms of Fiber, Tender opened on 24.10.96

The tenders are presently under examination.

Approved rate for Faxing

581. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any rate of charges for faxing matters from the booths of the Department has been fixed;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that some of the booth operators are charging exorbitant rates; and

(d) if so, the action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No Sir. In the booths run by the Department, only precribed rates are charged.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Telephones Out of Order in Vikas Puri under Jank Puri Exchange

582. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of areas where telephones in Vikas Puri under Janak Puri exchange remained out of order for